



Washington DC: von ammon co is pleased to announce its sixteenth project at its Cady's Alley location: *Go Back to PARTYCITY*®, a solo show by Tennessee-based artist Tom Holmes. The show will consist of over a dozen oil paintings on clear primed linen supports. Preferring a more perfunctory installation method, the artist will forgo a traditional wall installation and will place each work on a steel folding chair, which will allow the paintings inhabit the gallery's peculiar space sculpturally.

The conventional *memento mori* is not only a reminder of inevitable death but also of the entropy of the physical world: objects hold their form for an instant, and gradually return to the soil. The subjects depicted in Holmes' paintings—costumes and decor selected from the aisles of the *Party City*™ chain of retail stores—are made predominantly of polyester products: they will resist decomposition better than the mortal bodies who possess them, and will likely even outlast the linen, stretcher bars and earth pigments of the paintings that make up this exhibition. The tradition of *vanitas* painting inhabits the art historical epochs prior to 1907, at which point the invention of plastic supplanted the more terrestrial ivory, ceramic and wood as the preferred material for the creation of masks, toys, and other ephemera.

Erosion and decay are central concerns of the artist's overall project: in one series of paintings and sculptures, the rakish grins of Boo Berry™ and Frankenberry™ presage the decline of the American child's body via harmful processed ingredients; in another, ad hoc outdoor memorials for victims of mass shootings, made of plastic flowers, teddies and buntings, hold their form against the elements. *Go Back to PARTYCITY*® focuses on objects poised for degradation: pristine for a geological instant—the injection-molded jack-o-lantern, the powder blue gender-reveal garland, the mylar balloon—these will not dissolve into loam like the skull or the lily, but into a sort of sedimentary Funfetti™ in the fossil record.

*Go Back to PARTYCITY*® will be on view antipodally to Halloween. The paintings are tributes not only to the discarded but persistent scurf of lapsed celebrations, but also to the relentless agglomeration of discarded memories in the post-industrial / post-plastic human experience. While the *vanitas* was a commemoration of the ripening of our bodies and the crumbling of our valued possessions, these canvases augur a future where the past is prone for disposal but stubborn in its persistence and immune to rot.

The show's namesake not only refers to the American retail chain—which hosts a perennial Halloween aisle, and sections to supply any milestone in the human lifespan with disposable decor and costumes—but to the synecdochic *PARTYCITY*® which has come to represent the *bête noir* of all chic and culturally durable pursuits. While the provenance of many of the artist's subjects is the chain, they signify all things that painting has historically tried to resist: bad taste, decoration *per se*, and—most saliently—obsolescence.

Tom Holmes (b. Ozona, TX, lives and works in Putnam Co. & Jackson Co., TN) received a BFA from the University of Texas at Austin and an MFA from the University of California Los Angeles. Select solo exhibitions include *REALTREE*®, Bureau, New York, 2019; *L'EGGO MY EGGO*®, Bureau, New York, 2017; *Temporary Monument*, Kunsthalle Bern, 2013; *Piss Yellow / Bars & Stars*, Bureau, New York, 2013; *Part of This Complete Breakfast: objects for a wake*, Galerie Catherine Bastide, Brussels, 2012; and *Painted Bones - some reliquaries*, Bureau, New York, 2011. Their work has been included in group exhibitions at the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, Georgia; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Contemporary Art Biennial, Sélestat, France; Malmö Konstmuseum, Sweden and the Whitney Museum at Altria, New York. Their work is in the collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Stiftung Kunsthalle Bern, FRAC Bourgogne, and the Tang Museum at Skidmore College. This is their first solo exhibition at von ammon co and in Washington DC.

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